CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 25 August 1994, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Sirous Nasseri (Islamic Republic of Iran)

GE.94-64118 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 689th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

On behalf of the Conference, I am pleased to welcome the participants in the Disarmament Fellowship Programme who are with us for the first time today in order to follow the work of the Conference. I am sure they will benefit from exposure to this forum, especially at a time when it is engaged in intensive negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. I wish them a fruitful stay in Geneva.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representative of Malta, Ambassador Bartolo, who has just recently joined us in Geneva, and I therefore welcome him to Geneva and to the CD and I now give him the floor.

Mr. BARTOLO (Malta): Mr. President, allow me to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference and by assuring you of my delegation's full cooperation and support. I wish you every success during your term as President of the Conference. As the recently appointed Permanent Representative of Malta, I also look forward to working closely with the distinguished Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Bensmail, and the secretariat.

I wish today to refer to the ongoing negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty. I would also like to refer to issues relating to security in the Mediterranean.

In June of 1993 the delegation of Malta had stated that Malta was interested in the pursuit of disarmament and its implications. Malta had urged those States with military arsenals to intensify their efforts towards reduction of armaments and to build mutual confidence and trust, which was the basis of this process. Malta had also stated that the non-proliferation Treaty should be extended indefinitely and today calls upon other States that have not yet made such declarations to do so.

The expectations are high for the international community to conclude a speedy and comprehensive test-ban treaty. The steady momentum which has been maintained throughout this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament represents a clear indication that its deliberations and negotiations could result in such a test-ban treaty. A number of delegations have expressed their views on this matter and a number of key issues have already been discussed. However we understand that more time is needed to consider the converging views. As was done during the negotiations that led towards the chemical weapons Convention, we feel that the time has come for a first draft of a rolling text as a basis for the future work of the Conference on Disarmament which undoubtedly would facilitate the work of delegations in the months to come. Nuclear-weapon States have more responsibility and are better suited to conduct negotiations that would lead to a CTBT.

Nuclear weapons have proliferated over the decades and we should keep in mind that the impact and size of such weapons remain a threat to the security of other States be these nuclear or non-nuclear-weapon States. A CTBT should

(Mr. Bartolo, Malta)

ban all nuclear test explosions and such a ban should leave no loopholes and be universal. The task ahead for the Conference on Disarmament is critical and we have to respond to the expectations of the international community.

The actions of certain States have demonstrated that they possess the potential, capability and inclination towards producing nuclear weapons. This poses a major concern for all States in all regions. The prospects of a CTBT that would reinforce the non-proliferation Treaty and the entire nuclear non-proliferation regime therefore should encourage those States deeply involved to intensify the negotiations and reach compromise solutions that would ensure the widest possible adherence to the Treaty and that such Treaty is internationally verifiable.

The Mediterranean region faces various problems ranging from economic to social disparities, pollution of the environment, arms proliferation, conflicts, and in recent years the escalation of nationalism and extremism. These problems lead to insecurity and instability which destabilize our region.

The dramatic changes that took place in the international political environment after the end of the cold war and the recent positive ongoing developments in the Middle East are leading to initiatives that should enhance security, stability and cooperation in the region.

The concept behind the establishment of the United Nations arms Register was to foster openness among States regarding military matters. The Register aims at fostering transparency which is seen as a confidence-building measure for building trust among nations and for promoting progress towards disarmament. CBMs can foster peace and security in the Mediterranean when accompanied by cooperative measures in the political, economic and other fields. It is in this regional context that the United Nations arms Register provides a viable mechanism by promoting transparency in the field of military capabilities of States. We have to acknowledge however that the arms escalation in the region is evident, and goes beyond conventional weapons. Tactical ballistic missiles, chemical and bacteriological and other weapons of mass destruction if further developed endanger the region. The exclusion of weapons of mass destruction from the United Nations Register is a major shortcoming that weakens the Register.

It is pertinent to state that the changes which have taken place in Europe are relevant to the Mediterranean region and that economic, social, political and security developments in that region can have a bearing on Europe. Malta has been in the forefront to promote cooperation in the Mediterranean, through initiatives and dialogue with the Mediterranean States in different forums.

In Helsinki II, on Malta's proposal, the CSCE has become the regional arrangement for peace-keeping in terms of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Malta has sponsored the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean and has also proposed a Council of the Mediterranean.

(Mr. Bartolo, Malta)

Within such initiatives and responding to the needs of a dynamic Europe, Malta will also be examining the possibilities of being involved in the Partnership for Peace resulting from the NATO summit. This would ensure a closer form of cooperation with the Western European Union particularly in the new areas of peace-keeping and humanitarian activities. Malta will also be participating in the activities of the Mediterranean Forum launched recently in Alexandria, Egypt. In such forums, Malta will continue its active participation and will continue to express concern on emerging issues that affect our region. As stated by our Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs recently, "we have kept our contacts with countries in the region, believing that a process of dialogue is more conducive to peace than a process of wall-building".

It is within the process of such activities that Malta sees the Mediterranean as a test case of the overriding security challenge facing the international community. The Mediterranean is an important arms-importing and arms-producing region and available data indicates this fact. In short, the time has come to address security issues and disarmament matters of this region and examine those confidence-building measures that will foster peace and security for our future generations. This is the challenge of the future.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Malta for his statement and kind words addressed to the Chair. This concludes the list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation with to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

I feel duty bound, as President of the Conference, to impress upon all delegations, at this crucial time when we are striving to prepare our annual report to the General Assembly, the importance of displaying flexibility, good will and a spirit of compromise to enable us to overcome the obstacles facing us. I believe we are all aware of the difficulties currently being encountered in the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances and I hardly need to stress the importance for all of us to keep in mind the implications of a failure to agree upon a substantive report in that Committee. Let us remind ourselves that this Conference, in all instances, has been able to sum up its work and present substantive reports to the General Assembly. I am sure that if all of us keep in mind our accumulated experience and the established procedures that have traditionally guided our work, we will be able to see our way forward. Therefore, I should like to encourage all delegations to extend their full cooperation to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances, Ambassador Guillaume, in order for him to be able to finalize his report to the Conference.

I should also like to take this opportunity to appeal to all delegations to show flexibility in order to assist the Special Coordinator on "cut-off", Ambassador Shannon of Canada, in his untiring efforts to bring about a compromise on the mandate for an ad hoc committee on this important item.

May I now turn to the informal paper circulated by the secretariat, containing the timetable of meetings to be held next week by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies? This timetable has been prepared in consultation

(The President)

with the chairmen of the ad hoc committees. As you will see, provision has been made for one final meeting each for the committees on transparency in armaments and negative security assurances for the finalization of their reports. As agreed, all other meeting slots have, at this stage, been reserved for the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and its two working groups. It should be borne in mind, however, that should the need arise for a meeting on "cut-off", the timetable will have to be adjusted accordingly. So, on the understanding that the timetable is indicative and may be changed, if necessary, and with additional changes for Tuesday, 30 August (in fact, this is not a change, this is now an undetermined situation turning into a determined situation), we will have for the morning and afternoon of Tuesday, 30 August, Working Group 1 of the nuclear test ban Ad Hoc Committee - both for the morning and afternoon, we will have Working Group 1 meetings. With that change in mind, I suggest that we adopt this timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I give the floor to the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Guillaume.

Baron GUILLAUME (Belgium) (translated from French): As Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances, I would like to take the opportunity offered by this plenary meeting to make a final solemn appeal to all delegations to display statesmanship. You know that the report of the Ad Hoc Committee is deadlocked because, despite all my efforts, I have been unable to secure consensus on the structure of the report. The mandate given to the Committee calls on it to make a report. If I am unable to secure consensus from the delegations on this structure, there will be no report and I will have failed in my duty. We repeat over and over that the CD is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum; but to negotiate, you need resolve to arrive at a result and a spirit of compromise. It is now a question of minutes, not hours, because if by 4 p.m. this afternoon I do not detect this resolve to negotiate, this spirit of cooperation and this acceptance of compromise, I will be obliged to draw the appropriate conclusions in the Ad Hoc Committee. That is why I take the liberty of making this final solemn appeal to all delegations, to enable us to produce this report.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Guillaume for his comment and, indeed, for his appeal. I give the floor to the representative of Canada, Ambassador Shannon.

Mr. SHANNON (Canada): Mr. President, thank you for your admonitions to all of us with respect to the role I am attempting to fulfil as Special Coordinator for cut-off, and I certainly do share your hope and expectation that flexibility can be shown by all concerned to enable us to get a negotiating mandate during the few days remaining to us in this session. There will be a meeting of issue coordinators this afternoon at 3 p.m. and I hope we will begin the process of completing our work on the mandate.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Shannon for his comments. Are there any further comments? I see none. I therefore should also like to remind you that this meeting will be followed by informal open-ended consultations on improved and effective functioning of the Conference, chaired by Ambassador Kamal, and if time permits, which I hope it will, these consultations will be followed by an informal plenary meeting to begin consideration of the technical parts of the annual report to the General Assembly.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 1 September 1994 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.